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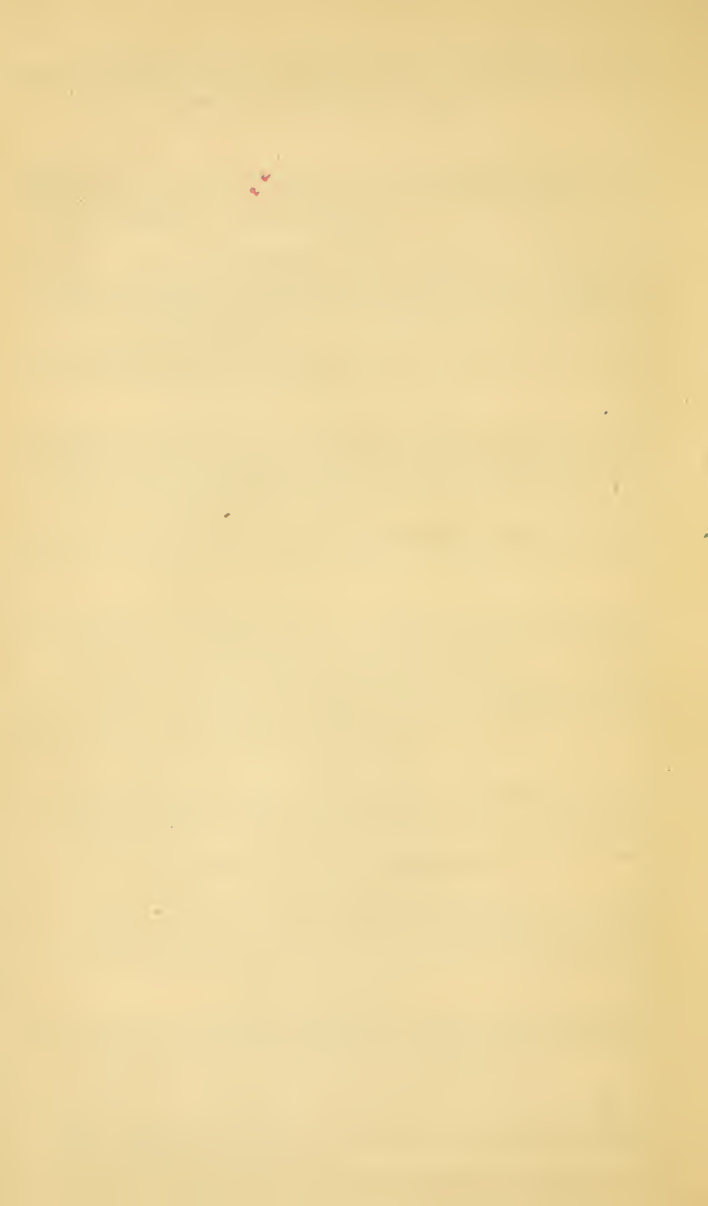
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THE sacraments of Christ are solemn ordinances, which the Son of God, “the author and finisher of our faith,” hath himself appointed, as signs and seals of our holy profession, as sacred pledges of those blessings which he hath purchased by his blood, which he dispenses by his power, and which he alone, as head over all things to the church, imparts to his faithful people. They are outward and visible signs which God in his wisdom hath thought right to appoint, to give us confidence in those exceeding great and precious promises which he has revealed in the word of life; and in the observance of which, we, as disciples of Christ, give an open profession of our high and heavenly calling. They are, at the

same time, a testimony of God's grace to us, and of our trust in him, and so are represented as the keys of the kingdom of God, by which the riches of grace, mercy, and love, are unlocked and opened to his faithful people. Like the word, the sacraments form an authentic pledge of God's covenant with men; they are a sure promise of his mercy and grace, for though his word may be despised, and his sacraments neglected, "nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his;" and "wisdom is justified of all her children."

The sacraments of Christ, when duly ministered, are not only outward and visible signs, of an inward and spiritual grace conveyed to the soul, but by this very grace they tend to strengthen, stablish, and settle our faith in Christ, so that his people may have more grace, or grace upon grace, and in the rightful use and observance of them—"grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This is their healing virtue—this is their saving power, as it leads to a communion with him who had all power to save. Not that we are to suppose that there is some secret and

magical benefit from a mere form of the sacraments of Christ. There cannot be a more fatal error than this; for the mere form of baptism, however observed, is of no avail unless we put on Christ; and the eating of the bread, and drinking of the wine, can be of no avail in the Lord's supper, unless we have a spiritual union and communion with Christ. For Jesus said unto them, " Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you; whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day; for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

Taken in a large and comprehensive sense, every sacred institution of our holy faith which has the sanction of the gospel, may be considered as a Christian sacrament, but there are two which being generally necessary to salvation are specially so called,—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. St. Augustine assures us ' that our Lord hath put us under his own light yoke, and his own easy burden; for by sacraments in number most few, in observance most easy, and in sig-

nification most excellent; he hath gathered together the society of a new people,—that is, baptism consecrated in the name of the trinity, and the communion of his own body and blood.’—*Aug. Ep. 118.*

Baptism is that holy ordinance which the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has appointed to admit his people into the rights and privileges of the new covenant of grace. “Go,” said he, “teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Baptism is therefore administered but once, at the time of admission into the new covenant; for, as the Apostle says, “there is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, *one baptism.*” On the principles of the doctrines of Christ, there is one baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins, and it is only once to be ministered; but it ought to be ministered to all, as being generally necessary to salvation. The Lord’s supper was appointed as a memorial of his dying love, and is to be solemnized as often as opportunity offers—“Do this,” said he, “in remembrance of me, for *as oft* as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye

do shew forth the Lord's death till he come." These sacred institutions, as our church declares, 'are outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.'

'Sacraments are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good-will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.' They are symbolical rites, and there is connected under them a meaning expressed in symbols, as well as in the words which are appointed to be spoken over them. The doctrines which are so embodied, are the most important doctrines of our holy faith; i. e. the atonement by the blood and righteousness of Christ, and sanctification by the grace and Spirit of God; and it is their very importance which gives them a title to be recorded in a more expressive and enduring form. 'For that which is set forth in a sensible sign, not only speaks more plainly, but also has a greater security of life than that which is declared only by oral

or written tradition.' Thus we see the relics of heathen customs survive among the people even to this day, long after all trace of writing and oral tradition have departed. Of such symbols, two have been left by the Lord Jesus Christ, expressive not only of what he has already done, but what he is still doing for his people; and these are the sacraments of Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

It is in the rightful exercise of these means of grace, that ministers employ the keys of the kingdom of God, so as to open or to shut, to loose or to bind, to remit or to retain sin. For our Lord says, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven; whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained. The sacraments of Christ are not only outward signs of the thing signified, that is, of the grace of God, but they are seals by which the covenant is personally ratified and confirmed, as a man's own act and deed in baptism; or as a continual memorial of his dying love in the Lord's supper, according to the promise of God, his saving grace is also conveyed

to the soul of every believer. The elements of water, and of bread and wine when consecrated to this holy use, are still only outward signs, they are still only elements, there is no change of the water in baptism, the bread and wine in the Lord's supper continue the same, without any change by transubstantiation or consubstantiation; but when duly consecrated to their sacred use and design, they most strikingly represent the grace and power of the Spirit of God, of which they are signs and tokens. The water in baptism represents the water of life, and so becomes the laver of regeneration, and by the bread and wine Christ is evidently set forth as crucified among us. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." It was so designed by our Lord when he took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and said, "Take, eat, this is my body;" likewise after supper he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of

the New Testament which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." Water is the sign of baptism in which the person is baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and so by the effectual workings of God's power, becomes the laver of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." The sacraments of Christ then are not only outward and visible signs to distinguish God's people, which are seen and known, and understood as objects of sense, but they both represent the mystical washing away of sin, and the invisible operation of God's grace and Holy Spirit in cleansing and enlightening, renewing and sanctifying the soul. They are not only keys, or signs of admission, but they are as it were seals annexed by God to the word of his grace, to assure us of an interest in the atoning blood, and justifying righteousness, and sanctifying Spirit of his Son.

When the outward and visible sign is ministered, it is seen; but the grace of God is unseen.

We know not how the gift of God is conveyed to the soul, it is the grace of his Holy Spirit; and the manner of its operation can only be known to “Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,” whose “thoughts are not as our thoughts, and whose ways are not as our ways;” but who “worketh both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” We know only that the same God exercises his sovereign power both in the operation of the natural and of the spiritual world. And as our Lord says, “the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” We can know its effect by what we witness in our own hearts, when “the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” We can know its effects on others by their life and conduct in the world—“Ye shall know them by their fruits;” and “the fruit of the Spirit is in all righteousness, and goodness, and truth.” “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” “And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by

the spirit which he hath given us ;” “ hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.” There is a promise of God to convey the gifts of his grace and Holy Spirit through the appointed means to those who rightly observe them, to those who ask with the prayer of faith, and in obedience to his holy will and commandments. “ It shall come to pass,” says God, “ that in the last days, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh.” “ I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground ; I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.”

The promises of the Spirit given by God himself under the old covenant are often repeated by Christ in the gospel of grace and salvation through faith in him. Thus he said to the woman of Samaria, “ If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” To the Jews he said, “ If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” “ He that believeth on me,” as the Scripture hath said, “ out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him

should receive ; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." On the very evening before his death, when he was about to return to the Father, and was taking his parting, affectionate leave of his disciples, he said to them "If ye love me keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth." "But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things" and "testify of me." "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment ;" "he shall guide you into all truth," "he shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

The promises thus made by the God of all grace to his faithful people in his holy covenant are not only exceedingly great and precious, but will on his part be most surely performed. "For all the promises of God in Christ are Yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God." "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,

how shall he not with him freely give us all things." He will most assuredly fulfil them all; he will keep and perform whatever he has engaged to do for his people.

The sacraments of Christ then, when duly ministered with the prayer of faith, and in dutiful obedience to the will and commandments of God, ensure the blessing from above; but without faith, or without prayer, or without obedience to the will of God, there can be no ground to expect the blessing. "Ye have not, because ye ask not:" "whatsoever we ask," says St. John, "we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." For "without faith it is impossible to please God, for they that come to him must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him." "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, (who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not), and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed, for let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."

• The pledges which God hath given in his word

and sacraments, can only be truly apprehended by faith, which is the gift of God, which comes by the hearing of God's word, and by the teaching of his Spirit. "No man can come to me," said Christ, "except the Father draw him." "It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God; every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." We must therefore ask for the blessing promised in faith; "this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us."

It ought ever to be had in remembrance by those who would know the truth as it is in Jesus, that the great design of the Christian sacraments is to exhibit Christ as a Saviour, and the treasures of heavenly grace conferred by him alone. The God of grace is ready to fulfil what he promises by these signs, for faithful is he that hath promised. But there is reason to guard, lest in the use of the holy rites appointed by him as outward signs, "we should exalt the sign, but forget the thing signified; lest there should be a mere form of godliness, while we

deny the power thereof ;” lest we should think the water of baptism had the virtue of washing and sanctifying the soul, and not the Spirit of God ; lest we should pay homage to the bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper, and forget the Saviour himself, of which they are the emblems. It should not be forgotten, that in the appointment of these sacraments, God intended to work by them, and with them, but not to transfer his virtue and power to them. The moment they are regarded more than signs and means of grace appointed by God, they become weak and beggarly elements. The author and finisher of our faith is ever the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He is all in all ; he is the Lord our righteousness ; he is “ of God, made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” He died on the cross once for all, as an offering and sacrifice to God, and he can save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” The sacraments of Christ then point to him, and when duly observed, are seals of the gracious promises of God in him ; they are solemn pledges of light and life, of grace and mercy, of pardon and

peace, of his Spirit to dwell with us here, and of eternal life hereafter ; and while they assure us of an interest in the blessings promised, they bind us to all thankful obedience from the most constraining motives of love and gratitude, for blessings and mercies promised or received. “ The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again.” On the part of God, they are as sure pledges that he will be ever mindful of his holy covenant, to keep it even to a thousand generations ; on the part of his people, when they engage in them in faith, they are a pledge, that while they place a trust in the exceeding great and precious promises, they will observe to do all that is commanded them. “ If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

The sacraments of Christ, as set forth in the everlasting gospel, are solemn appointments ordained of God. It is the God of all grace who gives the command to keep them,—it is the

God of all grace who gives the promise to bless them. They are not merely signs of admission into the new covenant: they are not merely badges of the public profession, and solemn confession of the high calling of Christ, but they are bonds of obedience to God, sacred obligations to the exercise of charity, helps to godliness, preservations from sin, and memorials of the love which is in Christ Jesus. They are intended, in the most impressive manner, to set forth the grace of God, that grace which is promised to all his people, who seek it in the appointed means, "for unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ." "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man, to profit withal." The blessing which attends the sacraments ordained by Christ, is not from any natural or inherent quality, which men may attach to them as elements, but from the power of God's name and gift who first ordained them by our Lord Jesus Christ, and who has promised to be with them alway, even to the end of the world. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The sacraments of Christ appointed and ordained for this

purpose by him, are necessary as signs and seals of the covenant, to distinguish his people as believers; they are needful as commanded by God, in diligent obedience to his will; but they are above all, needful as they are the appointed means, to convey grace to the souls of his people. In the everlasting covenant, as they are a pledge on the part of God, that he will fulfil his promise, so also when piously ministered in faith, they are a pledge given on the part of men, "that they love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and will walk in newness of life, keeping the commandments of God."

By a due observance of the sacraments appointed by Christ, every man who acts up to his solemn compact by baptism, gives the strongest proof of his confidence and trust in God. In this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true. A filial obedience in love to the Saviour, will thus prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." This proof of love was often declared by Christ himself, who says, "He that hath my com-

mandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him; if any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings." These holy sacraments being thus ordained by Christ himself, it follows, as the judicious Hooker observes, 'that grace is a consequent of them, a thing which accompanieth them as their end, a benefit which they have received from God himself, and not from any other natural or supernatural quality in them; they are necessary as moral instruments of salvation,—necessary not as physical, but moral instruments of salvation, duties of service and worship, which unless we perform as the author of grace requireth, they are unprofitable. For all receive not grace who receive the sacraments of grace. Neither is it ordinarily his will to bestow the grace of sacraments on any but by the sacraments, which grace they that receive by sacraments, or with sacraments, receive it from him and not from them. For of sacraments the very same is true, which Solomon's wisdom

observeth as to the brazen serpent. He that turned towards it, was not healed by the thing he saw, but by thee, O Saviour of all. This is therefore “the necessity of sacraments; that
“saving grace which Christ originally is, or hath
“for the general good of his whole church; by
“sacraments he severally imparts to the different
“members of his church. Sacraments serve to
“that end and purpose, as moral instruments,
“the use whereof is in the hands of men, the
“effect in the hands of God. Man is the visible
“minister, and God the invisible agent in the part
“by grace given. Man ministers in the divine
“ordinance, and hears the word of God, and
“prays according to the will of God, and God
“gives the blessing. For the use, we have his
“express commandment; for the effect, his condi-
“tional promise, so that without our obedience to
“the one, there is of the other no apparent assur-
“ance, as on the contrary, when the signs and
“sacraments of his grace are not unreceived, or
“not received with contempt, we are not to
“doubt, but that they really give what they
“promise, and are what they signify.”¹ It is not
their own nature which gives the sanctifying

¹ Hooker on Baptism.

effect to the elements, but the power and purpose of God who has appointed them, and when duly ministered, will give them his blessing in his promised grace to those who rightly receive them.

Such are the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's supper, not only as outward signs, but as a means of grace, and a pledge to assure us thereof ; and as such, being both appointed by Christ, they are both means of grace, generally necessary to salvation. As to baptism, he said to Nicodemus, " Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." And in respect to the Lord's supper, he said, " Do this in remembrance of me."

Having thus pointed out that which is common to both of the sacred ordinances instituted by Christ, I shall now consider in a more special and particular manner, the sacrament of baptism as taught in the gospel of grace and salvation. The doctrine of baptism is spoken of as among the principles of the doctrine of Christ. It is a well known fact, as Mr. Horne observes, in his introduction to them, that in all countries where the Christian faith is held, its professors are

initiated by baptism, and that by submitting to this rite, they renounce every other religious institution, and bind themselves to the profession of the gospel alone. On the part of those who administer this rite, it signifies that they act agreeably to the will of the Father who appointed the Christian religion, and by express commandment from him, and from his Son who published it, as well as from the Holy Ghost who confirmed it, when they baptize men into the belief and profession of Christianity. On the part of God, this ordinance is a declaration by his ministers, that he accepts and pardons the baptized person, provided he gives the answer of a good conscience, and in his subsequent life, acts agreeably to the obligations of baptism. And lastly, on the part of the baptised, their receiving of this rite is understood to be an affectionate and solemn public declaration of their sense of the relation in which they stand to God the Father as their creator, to God the Son as their redeemer, and to God the Holy Ghost as their sanctifier, according to the views which the Christian religion gives of these relations; and also of their firm resolution faithfully to perform the duties resulting from these

relations ; forming the sacraments of salvation, which assuredly claims the very solemn and serious attention of all who profess the high calling of Christ.

The Apostle Paul assures us that there is *one baptism*. This baptism is a federal act of admission into the new covenant, which is a covenant of gracious promises on the part of God, and demands a cordial reliance on these promises on the part of man, with a solemn engagement to fulfil those duties which are required. As a mere inaugural rite—as an outward form of initiation into the church of Christ, the sacred ordinance of baptism is in itself of a very simple nature, and very easy to be understood. It is the washing or baptizing the body in pure water. “ Let us (says the Apostle) draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” “ Christ so loved the church that he gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish.” The wash-

ing of the body in water is an act of religious purification, which generally prevailed in the Gentile world before the gospel was preached. Plutarch says that water tends to purify and cleanse the soul; and Tertullian assures us that it was employed by all nations for this purpose. Selden asserts, 'That among the Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians it was the custom for those who were initiated into their sacred rites to pass through an act of purification by dipping their body in water.' There is reason to suppose that all these mystical rites of purifying by water which prevailed among the Gentiles, had their origin from what God himself had ordained among his own people. For we know that water was appointed for this purpose under the law of Moses, especially for the priests when they were consecrated to their holy office. God said, Thou shalt wash them with water (Exod. xxix. 4.) And Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water. The Levites were consecrated to God after the same manner. "The Lord spake unto Moses saying, Take the Levites from among the children of Israel and cleanse them, and thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them, sprinkle water of purifying upon

them." There were indeed under the law, divers washings, all intended to sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, and all in use among the Jews.

Water is constantly set forth in the word of life as an emblem to represent the Spirit and grace of God, and indeed the resemblance in many respects between the natural elements and the spiritual grace, is very striking; for the one tends to purify and cleanse the body, and the other is designed to cleanse and purify the soul. Thus before the creation of the world was reduced from a state of chaos into order, we read that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The prophets often employ this figure to denote the washing of God's Spirit—"Wash, and be clean,"—"Wash you, make you clean."—"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters"—"for I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." And the prophet Ezekiel, speaking of the sanctification of God's people, says—"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you."

It is then with good reason that the grace and

spirit of God, as cleansing and purifying the soul, are so often represented in the word of life under the emblem of water ; but all these spiritual gifts proceed from one and the same source—the fountain of the water of life, or the fountain of living waters—even from our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the never-failing spring of light and life, and truth ; of grace, mercy, and peace to his people. “ I (says he) am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” “ I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely,” and “ whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”

This fountain of living water,—by the blood of Christ,—and by the grace and Holy Spirit of God, was not fully opened under the old covenant, yet it flowed at times and seasons for the people of God. Thus when a few persons were saved in the ark, it was designed as an emblem of the salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ : “ For as (St. Peter says) “ in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, eight souls were saved by water, the like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth now save us.” The passing of the people of Israel through the Red Sea was another symbol of the same kind, intended as a figure to represent the great de-

liverance wrought by the water and the blood which flowed from the side of Jesus Christ, when as he hung on the cross, “one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water, and he that saw it bare record, and his record is true.” “This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood.” This baptism of Christ by water and blood were typically represented under the old covenant. “I would not (says the Apostle) that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ.” The fountain of living waters was again opened at Mount Horeb, when Moses smote the rock and water gushed out. “He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great deep, he brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.” “He opened the rock and the waters gushed out, they ran in the dry places like a river.” We can have no doubt but these

waters were meant as types to prefigure the spiritual washing of Christ. The fountain of living waters by Christ, which was but faintly set forth under the old covenant, was fully opened under the new. It now began to flow more abundantly, and its healing virtue was now more apparent. “In that day (says God) there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.” Its healing and cleansing virtue as well as its comforting and refreshing power was to be felt and acknowledged by all the people of God. Referring therefore to the gift of the Holy Ghost, as the water of life, our Lord said to the woman of Samaria, “if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him and he would have given thee living water;” and addressing himself more generally to the Jews, he said, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.”

The element of water in the natural world is often employed as an emblem of the grace and holy Spirit of God as promised through our Lord Jesus Christ. "This is he that came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the spirit that beareth witness because the spirit is truth. There are three that bear witness on earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one." The fitness and propriety of this figure is evident, for as water tends to cleanse and purify, to strengthen and refresh the body, so the grace and holy Spirit of God tends to cleanse and purify, to strengthen and refresh the soul. On these grounds, we have reason to infer that Christ the author and finisher of our faith, so intended it when he gave commandment to his disciples, how they were to receive new converts into the covenant of grace, and give them a title to the blessings and privileges of the everlasting gospel. It was designed to be not only a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith, but a means of grace.¹ At a moment

¹ The grace which is given them with their baptism, doth so far depend on the outward, that God will have it embraced, not only as a sign or token of what we receive, but also as an instrument or mean whereby we receive grace.—HOOKER ON BAPTISM.

of all others the most interesting and solemn, when the Son of God had died on the cross, was risen from the dead, and was about to ascend into heaven, he gave this his last and most sacred commission to his disciples. “Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me both in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” “Go,” said he, “into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is *baptized* shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

The sanction of Christian baptism, as an initiatory rite of saving grace, is grounded on those commands of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, given after he had washed us from our sins in his own blood, after he had risen again for our justification, and at the very moment when he was about to ascend into heaven, to his Father and to our Father, to his God and to our God, and therefore demands the most serious attention of all his people. The holy sacrament as an outward

ordinance is in itself a very plain and simple institution ; yet plain and simple as it is, there is none on which professors of the gospel have more differed in opinion, none which hath been interpreted with a more various and opposite meaning,¹ as to the promises of grace which attends it when duly observed. There are some who perceiving that the great design of the gospel is that men should be quickened by the spirit of God, have been led to think that under the new covenant of grace there is no need of the baptism of water : there are others who, admitting the washing of the body in pure water, have considered it as a mere sign of admission into the new covenant, but not as any means of grace, or a pledge to assure us thereof. There are others again who in an opposite error have maintained that the sacrament of baptism when once administered as a mere form of godliness, confers on the person baptized, as a mere form, an *opus operantis*, all the blessings of the everlasting gospel, without fervent prayer or true faith in the act itself, and without any change of heart and mind and life in the person baptized,—without

¹ Sacraments, says Hooker, by reason of their mixed nature, are more diversely interpreted and disputed of than any other.

any conversion, renewal, or sanctification of the soul. So too in the ministration of baptism there are some who consider it to be Christian baptism valid and perfect, when performed by laymen, and even women and children who never received any commission or authority for the purpose.¹ From the different notions thus entertained as to the holy sacrament of baptism, and from the manner in which it is too often ministered, even by those who are rightly appointed to their office, we need not be surprized that much of the sacredness and solemnity of this holy ordinance has been actually lost in the present day, and that it is not what it was intended—an act of consecration to the service of God, as well as to convey the gift of grace and God's spirit to the soul as appointed by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The sacrament of baptism from being so desecrated, instead of being the means to ensure the blessings which are promised in the covenant of grace, is too often considered as little more than giving a name to the person baptized: nay, there are numbers who like Simon Magus of old,

¹ The nullity of that which a judge doth by way of authority is known to all men, and agreed with full consent of the whole world.—HOOKER.

admitted to baptism, have no part nor lot in the matter, “honouring God with their lips while their heart is far from him,” who “observe the outward form as a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof;” who “have a name to live, but are dead.” In such circumstances as these, while ignorance and error, superstition and formality, so much prevail, it is needful for those who would entertain just and correct views of this sacred institution, and who would rightly observe it as an ordinance of God, seriously to consider and to reflect on it, and to examine themselves whether they be in the faith, and to prove themselves; and it must behove every disciple of the Lord Jesus seriously to attend to the *doctrine of baptisms*, as revealed in the word of divine truth. With a view to assist those who may not duly have reflected on this important subject, I shall in the following sheets endeavour to point out the true nature and design of Christian baptism, shew the privileges and blessings which are promised to it when rightly ministered and duly observed, and suggest some improvements, which by the grace and blessing of God might be made to answer its real object and original design, especially as it applies to our own church.

The first person by whom baptism was ministered as a direct admission into the church of Christ, was by him who was foretold by the two prophets, Isaiah and Malachi, “as coming in the power and spirit of Elias,” and as being sent “to prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight in the desert an highway for our God,” whose name the angel said should be John, who “was filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb,” and who, when he entered upon his holy office, was emphatically distinguished as the *Baptist*:—“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” He preached repentance for the remission of sins, and he pointed out the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as the only way in which sinners could attain such remission, saying, in pointing to Jesus Christ as the Saviour, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world; this is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me, for he was before me. And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.” “Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea,

and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." He not only baptized them with water, but he pointed out Christ, by whom alone they could receive a spiritual baptism, and become the children of God :—" I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance ; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." It was at this auspicious moment, while John was baptizing in the river Jordan, that Jesus came from Galilee to be baptized of him ; but John forbade him, saying, " I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me ? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now : for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him ; and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This was the very proof which had before been signified by John to identify the person of Christ to be the Son of God, and Saviour of the world ;—" and I knew him not,"

says he, “but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.”

If the question be asked in respect to John's baptism, whether it was an appointment of God or not? whether it was human or divine?—if it be asked, whence was it, from heaven or of men?—we have no hesitation in giving an answer, that it was from heaven,—that it was divine,—that it was appointed of God. One of the prophets speaks of him, “as the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert an highway for your God.” Another prophet represents him much under the same character, saying, “Behold! I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.” “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” John the Baptist was indeed sent before to prepare the way of Christ; to “go before him in the spirit and power of Elias; to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobe-

dient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." John had been fully convinced by a special and divine manifestation at his baptism, that Jesus was the Christ, by the Spirit descending and remaining upon him, "and he saw, and bare record that he was the Son of God." It was not then to satisfy himself when he was cast into prison, but to satisfy his disciples who entertained some doubt on this point, that John called unto him two of his disciples, and sent them to Jesus, saying, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another? and in the same hour he cured many of their infirmities, and plagues, and evil spirits; and unto many that were blind, he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached; and blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? a man clothed in soft

raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in king's courts. But what went ye out for to see? a prophet? yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet:" for "among them that are born of women, there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." The promised Saviour at once appealed to the proof which had been declared by Isaiah the prophet, when he says, "your God will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prison to those that are bound." "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

The baptism of John, as proceeding from God, was an introduction to that of Christ, and it was like it, or rather the same in many points. It was the same in regard to the outward washing

of water, as a sign of admission into the church of Christ ; it was the same as a seal of righteousness, which is by faith. The baptism of John was the same, as requiring repentance for the remission of sins ; it was the same as directing sinners to look alone unto Jesus, and behold him “ as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” But there was one point in which it was not the same,—as to its inward and spiritual effects ; it was not the same as to the baptism of the Holy Ghost ; it was only a sign of grace, and did not convey the grace of God to the soul. This can only be effected by Christ himself, that “ quickening spirit ” which came down from heaven. “ For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” “ The hour cometh,” says he, “ and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” Thus we read, “ that when Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan went out to John, and were baptized of him confessing their sins,” he said, “ I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, he shall baptize

you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” The baptism of the Spirit, which is effected on all the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, by the conversion, renewal, and sanctification of the soul, is the great end and object of Christian baptism. But the baptism of water, as an emblem of the righteousness which is by faith, which prefigures it, and which as a means of grace is intended to lead to it, is absolutely required from all those who would enter into covenant with him. “For, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” In the outward baptism of Christ, it is required of all those who enter into covenant by this seal of righteousness, not only to make a confession of Christ as the Son of God, but to make a public and solemn renunciation of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

It is indeed required of all who name the name of Christ, to “repent and believe the gospel,” “to repent and be converted,” to “repent and turn to God, and to do works meet for repentance.” But it was especially required when new converts were admitted into the Church of Christ by baptism; as therefore we read that John did baptize in the wilderness, and “preach the bap-

tism of repentance unto the remission of sins ; and there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river Jordan confessing their sins." It is evident, however, that there was an essential difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ, as to the gift of grace and the Holy Spirit of God. " John verily baptized with water unto repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus Christ." John was a divine messenger intended to prepare the way of Christ ; and his baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins, was designed in the wisdom of God as a preliminary step to lead to the more perfect baptism, the baptism not only of water, but of the Spirit by " the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is declared accordingly that as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts whether he were the Christ or not ; John answered, saying unto them all, " I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes, I am not worthy to unloose ; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

Much has been said as to what was intended by the baptism of fire, and many fanciful interpretations have been given of it. Some have inferred from it the doctrine of purgatory, and tried to confirm it by what the Apostle says when he speaks of a person being “saved, yet so as by fire.” But he speaks of spiritual baptism,—the fire of grace, as the context shows: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.” The plain and obvious meaning of the words, “being baptized by the Holy Ghost and with fire,” refers to the purification of the sinner’s heart by the grace and power of Christ, for he is, as the prophet says, “as a refiner’s fire and as fuller’s soap,” and “the Lord shall wash away the filth of the dwellers of Zion, and shall purge the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.” It is the prerogative of Christ to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. As fire enlightens, so does the Spirit of Christ with the light of divine truth; as fire kindles into a flame, so does the Spirit of Christ with the flame of divine love. As the fire purifies and refines, so does the Spirit of Christ refine and purify the sinner’s heart. “I am

come," said Christ, "to send fire upon the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled." The spiritual baptism of Christ imparts to the souls of his people, light, and life, and grace, and power. It comes as the fire of God's Spirit to sinful men. It illumines their minds, converts their hearts, and sanctifies their souls. This sanctification is manifested by "putting off the old man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and by putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." It operates as it were a refiner's fire, which consumes all their dross, and kindles in them the flame of love and zeal. Our Lord himself reminded his disciples of this essential difference as to the baptism of John and himself, after he was risen from the dead. Being assembled together with them, he commanded them "that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which," saith he, "ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Not many days after, they were indeed thus baptized of the Spirit, baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire; "For when the day of Pentecost was

fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of *fire*, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." On the same day, that is the day of Pentecost, the promise of this spiritual baptism was given to all them who, being taught of God, should enter into the new covenant of grace, with humble and penitent hearts, and with a true and lively faith. Being risen from the dead, and having ascended up on high, Jesus was now glorified, and the Spirit was given through him. The baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, was the effect of Christ's ascension to glory, when "he received gifts for men, yea, even for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." This was the very inference which Peter drew on the day of Pentecost in his appeal to the Jews. Therefore he said, "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the gift of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, the Lord said unto

my Lord, sit thou upon my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they had heard these things, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be *baptized*, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

The washing of water, then, is the visible sign in the baptism unto repentance, for the remission of sins. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is the inward and spiritual grace, "for he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved;" "he that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself." Christian baptism cannot be perfect and complete, without both the outward sign and the inward grace. The washing of water would be of no avail, without the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and

even the baptism of the Spirit would not be sufficient, without the outward seal of righteousness. The gospel requires both. And therefore Jesus answered and said unto Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” By the appointment of God, the baptism of water was designed as a sign of the righteousness by faith, to convey grace to the soul; but this grace may, by the power of God, be imparted without it. Yet the outward seal of righteousness by the baptism of water, is still required in the new covenant. We have full proof of this in respect to Cornelius, his kinsmen, and near friends, on whom, by the preaching of Peter, the Holy Ghost fell, “and they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost, for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” Then answered Peter, and said, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be *baptized* which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.”

Even in point of outward form, Christian baptism, after our Lord's ascension, ministered in the name of the Lord, and in the name of Jesus Christ, differed in one essential point from the baptism of John, for "John baptized with water unto repentance for the remission of sins, but in no name." Christian baptism, after our Lord ascended up on high, was solemnized, according to the command of Christ, "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

The spirit of grace is promised to all those who thus enter into covenant with God, by the new and living way through faith in Jesus Christ, of whatever sex, or age, or condition, and fulfil their parts in it. "It shall come to pass in the last days," saith God, "that I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, and whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." It was in this faith, that Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things spoken of Paul, was baptized, and her household;" it was in this faith that the Jailor at Philippi was baptized, he and all his. But we have the most striking proof of the difference between the baptism of Christ and John's baptism, as to the gifts of grace and the Holy Spirit

of God, from what happened when Paul came to Ephesus, and said unto them “ Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? ” And they said unto him, “ We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost ; ” and he said unto them, “ unto what then were ye baptised ? ” and they said, “ unto John’s baptism.” Then said Paul, “ John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus ; and when Paul had laid his hands on them, they received the Holy Ghost.”

The converts at Samaria when they “ believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” After they had been thus baptized with water, the apostles, Peter and John were sent unto them, “ who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet he was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” The gift of the Holy Ghost was

thus imparted to those who had been before actually baptized with water, by the laying on of the apostle's hands. The end of Christian baptism was thus perfectly consummated by the baptism of water and of the Holy Ghost.

The gift of grace must be conveyed to the soul, to fulfil the design of baptism. Every member of the Church of Christ, to be a child of God, must partake of this Spirit of promise, as well as of the washing of water, for as our Lord said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; that which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit; marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." The apostle refers to the same washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, when he says in regard to all who are made partakers of a divine nature—"If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." "Beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord," we are all "changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the new creature,"—

“for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.”

Christian baptism then, when it is perfect and complete, consists of two parts, the outward baptism of the washing of water, and the inward baptism of the Spirit; and the water in which the person is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, was manifestly designed to be an emblem of the washing of the soul by the grace and Holy Spirit of God. The Saviour himself, the Holy One of God, was without sin, he had in himself a fulness of grace, and possessed the Spirit without measure; yet to give a divine sanction to this sacred ordinance, to fulfil all righteousness, he was baptized with water. The baptism of water, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, were manifested in quick succession and that visibly to all present. “It came to pass that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the Holy Ghost, descended in a bodily shape, like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven which said, thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.” It follows then that the outward washing is the laver of regeneration by water, and the inward washing is the regeneration by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Both

are required. If the washing of water or the washing of the Spirit be wanting, it cannot answer the full end and purpose of Christian baptism. The Gentile converts at Cæsarea who had already received the Holy Ghost were afterwards baptized with water. "Then," answered Peter, "can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we." And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord. Simon Magus, who had already been baptized with water, offered money that he might have this power, that on whom soever he should lay hands, he might receive the Holy Ghost. "But Peter said unto him, thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God."

The rite of circumcision forms a striking analogy to that of baptism; circumcision under the old covenant as a token between God and his people, was in many points the same as baptism in the new covenant of grace. Both were signs of righteousness by faith, both implied a corresponding change of heart. As the washing of

water and the washing of the Spirit are both required under the new covenant, so likewise under the old it was needful that there should be not only an outward circumcision of the flesh, but an inward circumcision of the heart. By the command of God every male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day. This was the outward and visible sign. God said unto Abraham, "Thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou and thy seed in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee ; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your fore-skin, and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you. He that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations ; he that is born in the house or bought with money of any stranger which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house and he that is bought with thy money must needs be circumcised, and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his fore-skin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people. He hath broken my covenant." Gen. xvii. 9.

The neglect of this rite was a direct violation of God's covenant when any of his people would not duly observe the outward sign, and it was declared by God himself, that that soul should be cut off from his people. It did not however follow that all those who thus entered into covenant with God by this outward token, by this sign of righteousness, were partakers of his inward grace. No, God gave the promise of his blessing only to those who were circumcised in heart, who keep his covenant to do it, who are stedfast in his covenant, who continue in his covenant. For when God said to Abraham, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and unto thy seed after thee," He added at the same time this command, "thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore thou and thy seed after thee in their generations." And in repeating the sum and substance of what he required from all his people in the book of Deuteronomy, he proclaimed the blessing or the curse which would await them as they obeyed his covenant or not. "See I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil, in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy

God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live, and the Lord thy God shall bless thee ; but if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing ; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him, for he is thy life.”

To ascertain whether a man was a true Israelite it was not enough that he had been admitted into covenant by circumcision, but that he had been circumcised also in heart and mind, and walked according to the law and holy commandments of God. We have sad and melancholy proofs from the history of the people of Israel under the law to shew that many of them brake the covenant of their God, and forsook his covenant, and forgot his covenant ; and by such breach, forsaking and forgetting the covenant, they forfeited all the privileges and blessings which were

promised them, and proved that although they were a special and peculiar people whom God had chosen unto himself above all the nations of the earth, they were not Israelites indeed. For as the Apostle says, “ they are not all Israel who are of Israel ;” and “ circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law, but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision ; for he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh ; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God.”

It is precisely the same in this respect as to the new covenant of grace. The mere outward form of baptism in washing the body in pure water, although ministered by persons ordained to the sacred office, and according to the due and prescribed order of the church, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, can be of no avail to the saving of the soul, if there be no faith in God, no conversion of soul. For “ without faith it is impossible to please God, and they who come to him must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him.”

As many as receive him, to them “ gives he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name,” which are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” “ We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

The spiritual transformation of the soul by the renewing of the mind, and dutiful obedience to his will have been required under both covenants. “ We know that the law is spiritual.” “ The law is holy, just, and good.” It was most certainly the end and design both of the law and the gospel, to give men “ a new heart and a new spirit,” so as to “ make them willing in the day of his power.” “ This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws in their minds, and in their hearts will I write them,”—that the people of God should be born again and become his children by adoption and grace. Christ said to the Pharisees, “ Every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted, must be rooted out.” And to Nicodemus, “ Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? We speak that we do

know, and testify that we have seen.” But alas, these gracious designs have been generally overlooked, and too seldom attained under both covenants. The divine records are a full proof how often they were frustrated under the law, and that God himself expostulated with his people of Israel as a rebellious nation. The reproof of the martyr Stephen in respect to the Jews who had been all circumcised in the flesh, is full to the point: “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised both in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did so do ye.” Even under the gospel of grace and salvation, with far more light, better promises, and greater privileges, there is too often reason to ask, “Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” There is too often reason to complain that “many are called, but few chosen.” A very large portion, it is to be feared, of those who have been admitted into the new covenant by the holy sacrament of baptism, and signed with the sign of the cross in token that hereafter they will not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, have a name to live while they are dead, and tread

under foot the Son of God, and do despite to the spirit of grace. “Professing that they know God, in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.” “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even again weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” The two covenants of God however, as to their end and design, still remain the same, and both the circumcision of the flesh, and the baptism by water, are set forth as signs and seals of “the righteousness of God by faith” in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death. By faith Noah became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Abraham, the father of the faithful, “believed in God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness;” and the Apostle assures us “that it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for us also to whom it will be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus from the dead, who was de-

livered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." To suppose that the gifts and graces of the gospel attach to mere outward forms and professions without real faith, is a great and fatal mistake. The promises of God do not warrant any such inference. They apply only to believers, to them that love Christ and keep his commandments. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." This we know, that God is faithful who promised, but we know also that his promises attach not to unbelievers, but to the called, the chosen, the faithful. The ordinance of baptism when rightly ministered and received by faith, is a sure and certain pledge of all the promises of the Christian covenant, such as union with Christ, adoption into the family of God, the election of grace, and the inheritance of the saints. True believers when baptized, become members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; but unbelievers, though baptized, though formally washed with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have no such privilege. "For this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and

this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." All the early fathers of the church agree in this point, as to the end and design of baptism. 'He who takes baptism without a full faith, (says Jerome) takes the water, but takes not the Spirit.' 'Where (says Augustine) is this so great virtue of the water, that it should touch the body, unless by the power of the word, not spoken, but believed.' 'Thou seest water; (says Ambrose) every water heals not. That water only heals which hath the grace of God annexed.' 'If there be any grace in the water (saith Basil) it is not of the nature of the water; but of the presence of the Spirit.' 'Baptism is indeed, (as St. Ambrose styles it) the pledge and image of our resurrection, yea (as Basil) the power of God to resurrection; but (as Ignatius expounds this phrase aright) believing in his death, we are by baptism made partakers of his resurrection. Baptism, therefore, without faith cannot save a man, and by faith doth save him; and faith without baptism (where it cannot

be had ; not where it may be had and is despised) may save him. That Spirit which works by means, will not be tied to means.'—*Bishop Hall, Decad 5.*

The outward signs and seals of the two covenants in circumcision and baptism were never of real virtue to the saving of the soul unless received by faith. The promise of God made to Abraham, that “in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed,” was given to all believers, but only to believers, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. “Cometh this blessedness,” says the apostle, “upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also ; for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned, when he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet circumcised, that he might be the Father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the Father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who walk in the steps of that faith of

our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised. For the promise that he should be heir of the world was not to Abraham or his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." The inference which the apostle draws from this reasoning is, that all the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus, whether Jews or Gentiles, are equally entitled by the covenant of grace, (of which the sacrament of baptism is the outward sign and seal) to the same spiritual blessings and privileges, which were promised to Abraham, when "he believed in God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness." "Know ye, therefore," says he, "that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham; and the scripture foreseeing, that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then, they which are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham. He and all the true children of God are blessed only through faith in Jesus Christ. "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." "For as many of you as

have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

It is evident then that both circumcision and baptism were designed by God to be not merely signs and seals of admission into his covenant, but means and pledges of his grace by faith, which he promises to all those who enter into and keep his covenant to do it. As signs and seals annexed to his word of grace and truth, they give the strongest warrant that all the promises of God to which they relate will be fulfilled; and the great end and object to which they both point is the conversion of the heart, renewal of the mind, and sanctification of the soul. The circumcision of the flesh was designed as a striking figure to represent the circumcision of the heart, and the baptism of water is an emblem of the baptism of the Spirit, by which believers are washed and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. A change of heart and mind and life, is the end of Christian baptism, and there-

fore the apostle says, “that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but the new creature,” faith which worketh by love—the keeping the commandments of God. The saints and faithful in Christ Jesus, outwardly baptized with water, and inwardly baptized of the Spirit are indeed the children of light, the children of grace, and the children of God washed and sanctified and justified—and why? because by faith in Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God they receive the “adoption of sons,” are “born again of the Spirit,” and are made partakers of a divine nature—“And because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” “The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs of Christ.” Fallen, sinful, corrupt creatures, “dead in trespasses and sins,” nay, those who were once rebels against God are thus “accepted in the beloved,” and admitted into a state of grace and favour as his own beloved and elect children. They are the called, the chosen, the faithful. They are the remnant according to the election of grace. “Behold what

manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” “ Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” These are the blessed effects of being born again of water and the Spirit, and so being made the children of God by adoption and grace. “ For as many as receive Christ, to them gives he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” The inward change is thus wrought in a sinner’s heart by the power of God’s grace, and the effectual working of his spirit who sanctifieth all the elect people of God. And the change will always prove itself by his life and conversation in the world, by his character and conduct, by walking in newness of life, and keeping the commandments of God. The true people of God, his children by faith in Jesus Christ, may be discerned by their fruits, just as correctly as a tree may be known by its fruit. “ Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but

a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit; every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire; wherefore by their fruits shall ye know them." They are to be known, not by what they pretend or profess, but by having their fruits unto holiness. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

It would be in vain for those who make profession of the high and heavenly calling of Christ to contend for the mere form of water baptism, unless it be confirmed by these blessed fruits of spiritual regeneration. "For God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness." "Ye shall have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." It is very evident that no child of God can live in any known wilful or habitual sin. "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth

not his brother." "Beloved, let us love one another, for every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God." And again he says, "We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith; who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." The end of baptism is effected, not by the washing off the impurity of the body, but by washing off the corruption and defilement of the soul, by washing us from guilt and sin in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Accordingly baptism, as St. Peter says, "doth save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God." This is the professed end and design of the holy sacrament, which admits us into the new covenant of grace. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death? therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

It follows then that the inward seal of baptism by the washing of the Spirit, may be ascertained by the fruits of the Spirit, as the outward seal is set by the washing of the water. “Ye shall know them by their fruits.” “Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments; he that says, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.” “Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.” “This,” says St. John, “is the commandment of God, that we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” This spiritual transformation of the soul, by the putting off the old man, was manifested in a very striking manner in the change of conduct to be discerned in the converts of Corinth, some of whom had been once fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners; but

they were washed, they were sanctified, they were justified “in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” Their inward change of heart was proved in demonstration of the Spirit and of truth, by their outward change of life. The renewal of the heart will be manifested in all the children of God, “by walking in newness of life, keeping the commandments of God.” “For if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.” The change of character and conduct will be more striking and apparent in some than in others; but in all may be discerned a filial love, and dutiful obedience to the holy will and commandments of God. Our Lord himself has laid down this mark as the only certain proof of affection and regard to him “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.” “If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings.” “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my

love," "if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Such filial love, such dutiful obedience in his people was the effectual working which the God of all grace promised from the abundant out-pouring of his Holy Spirit under the new covenant. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days saith the Lord, I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

We must infer then, that circumcision and baptism in many points bear a striking resemblance to each other; both were signs of the righteousness by faith; both of them were seals of admission into the church of God; in both there is a promise of forgiveness of sins, through the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Both were pledges, to assure us of God's favour and good-will towards his people. Both require repentance from dead works, and a confidence in God. The promises which he hath given in the new covenant, are indeed better than those in the old, and "all the promises of God in Christ are yea and amen, to the glory of God by us." We have the fullest sanction, the most certain warrant, that they will all be fulfilled, that not one jot or one tittle shall fail, "heaven and earth shall pass away, but his words shall not pass away." To give us the full assurance of faith and hope in Jesus Christ, we have not only the promises of God, but we have the positive confirmation of his oath. "God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast."

The holy sacrament of baptism therefore, when properly ministered and duly applied by faith in Jesus Christ, gives the promise of the pardon of sin, the assurance of grace and mercy

to help in time of need, of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and of everlasting life. All these blessings are comprised in that salvation, of which Christ speaks when he says, "he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." They are all a free gift of God, through faith in Jesus Christ. "For that is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." "By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," "that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." A sure and certain title is given to this righteousness by Christian baptism, when rightly ministered and duly received by his church. For as St. Paul says, "Christ also so loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, *with the washing of water by the word*, that he might present unto

himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish ;” and referring to the true end and spiritual design of baptism, he says, “ he saved us by the *washing* of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

When St. Peter declares that baptism doth save us, he does not mean that our salvation is effected by the mere washing of water, or that the water has of itself any power of cleansing, regenerating, and renewing the heart ; but that as appointed by Christ in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, it is the outward means of grace in applying this spiritual gift to the soul ; “ not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” The sacrament of baptism indeed gives no promise of any cleansing, but through the blood and spirit of Christ which it represents,—that blood which cleanseth from all sin, that Spirit which was to be poured out on all flesh, and which sanctifies all the elect people of God. The inward and spiritual grace of baptism is thus as our church declares, ‘ a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness ; for

being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.'

It has been thought by some, that the efficacy and virtue of baptism as a spiritual seal of the righteousness which is by faith, applies only to sins that are past; and from this opinion in the early times of the church, some who were deeply sensible of its high importance, were disposed to put it off to the time of old age, or to the hour of death, thinking it to be a safe and certain passport to heaven. But this was a great mistake, and gross abuse of this holy sacrament, which not only admits the children of God into all the privileges of the new covenant, but was designed as a perpetual token that the God of all grace will fulfil all the promises which he hath given in his everlasting covenant, and that he is ready to receive into the arms of his mercy, every returning penitent who has been baptized into the faith of Jesus Christ, at any period of life, whether young or old. When duly solemnized, as one baptism for the remission of sins, the virtue of it will ever after apply to them that shall truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his gospel. The sinner may have committed sins after he has been consecrated to God

by this holy ordinance, either in childhood, youth, or adult age, and yet when he fully repents, and is converted, his sins shall be blotted out; Peter no doubt had been baptized before he denied Christ; and Peter when he wept bitterly was pardoned and restored to a state of grace, and mercy, and peace. The incestuous man at Corinth had, as a member of the church, without question been baptized when he committed fornication, such as was not named amongst the Gentiles, and the apostle had passed this judgment respecting him:—"I verily as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." But as soon as he expressed contrition, and godly sorrow for his sin, he was again to be restored to a state of grace. "Sufficient," said he "to such a man, is this punishment, which was inflicted of many,

so that ye ought to forgive him and comfort him; lest, perhaps, such an one should be swallowed up of over-much sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that you would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also; for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ, lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices." The apostle lays down the same rule in general, as to all those who have been admitted into the church by the seal and sign of baptism. "Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." The doctrine, therefore, which is taught in our article on this point, is sound, and exactly consistent with the word of truth. Not every deadly sin willingly committed after baptism, is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin *after baptism*. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from

grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God, we may arise again, and amend our lives. And therefore, they are to be condemned which say, they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent. It is from this doctrine clearly set forth in the gospel, that we infer sin may be pardoned, although committed after baptism.

There is not, however, any licence in the gospel to continue in sin. What can deter the children of God from sin, if not a serious reflection on the ransom paid for sin, on the price at which sinners have been bought? “for ye were redeemed not by corruptible things, such as silver or gold, but by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot.” “He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” “He bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness.” The very sacrament of baptism is in itself a solemn confession of our most holy faith, and like the oath of old, sworn to leaders and commanders, to kings and princes,

binds all who profess the gospel, to “confess the faith of Christ crucified, to fight manfully under the banner of the cross, and to continue Christ’s faithful soldiers and servants unto their lives’ end.” The very profession required in this ordinance, imposes on the disciples of Christ, as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, to live unto him who died for them and rose again, to devote themselves to his service, and to count themselves happy to suffer for the name of Jesus. “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and *our bodies washed with pure water.*” It is on this principle, that the sacrament of baptism is a sanction and warrant and pledge of a godly and a Christian life; when we consecrate our children or adults to God, we present our prayer to his mercy-seat, that he by his grace and Holy Spirit, may grant that all carnal affections may die in them, and that all

things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in them, and that they may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh. ‘Baptism,’ as our church rightly declares, ‘represents unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him, that as he died and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized die from sin and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.’ It is for this reason that in the word of life we are so often put in remembrance of our baptismal engagements and the sacred obligations which follow from them. “Know ye not,” says St. Paul, “that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” And again, he says, “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.” The very faith in which, as disciples of Christ, we are baptized, is not

only that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and Saviour of the world; but that through Christ, there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust, that every one of us must give up an account of himself to God, that “we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and that every one may receive according to the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad;” and therefore the apostle puts this question, as to those who have been dedicated to God by baptism:—“Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all; why are they then baptized for the dead?”

It is in this faith that the true believer must count his cost, and in all the trials and perils of life be prepared to take up his cross and follow Christ, who said, “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.” And on this assurance the Saviour himself, our glorious Immanuel, applies the figure of baptism, to represent the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion to which he was about to submit, before he entered into his glory, when the two sons of Zebedee said unto him, “Grant unto us that we may sit one on

thy right hand and the other on thy left hand, in thy kingdom. Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask ; are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with ? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with, but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." This exaltation is prepared for his true and faithful servants, the children of God, who having their sins blotted out, in love do his will and keep his commandments, the called, the chosen, and faithful, who are written in the Lamb's book of life, to whom the Everlasting Judge will say in the great day of account, "Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom, prepared for you from the beginning of the world." But to unbelievers, to impenitent sinners, although they may have called him "Lord, Lord !" although they may have outwardly entered into covenant by the seal of baptism, he will say, "Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity ; go, ye cursed,

into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. The vows, promises, and professions, made in their baptism, will only aggravate their sin and increase their damnation. They shall have their portion with hypocrites and unbelievers. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

It follows, then, that the holy sacrament of baptism, as an ordinance of Christ, is not merely an inaugural rite, not merely a form of admission into the church, but when rightly ministered and duly observed, gives a sure and certain title to all the privileges and blessings of which God spake by all his holy prophets which have been since the world began, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant. The free gift of grace, the exceeding great and precious promises which he has provided for us, in Christ, will apply to believers and their children, as the promised seed in every age. "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my spirit which is upon thee, and my word, which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, from hence-

forth for ever. I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thine offspring." All true believers and their seed are included in the same covenant of mercy and grace, and therefore the apostle says, "to Abraham and his seed were the promises made; he says, not to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed which is Christ; and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

The rich blessings of grace and salvation thus covenanted by God, who is a God of truth, and cannot lie, are not promised to those who merely enter into his covenant, but to those who fulfil the covenant, who keep the covenant to do it, and continue in it; for he declares himself, that he is "a jealous God, and will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him, and shew mercy unto thousands in them that love him and keep his commandments."

The Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift, while he gives the promise of more grace to those who enter into covenant, and live in dutiful obedience to his holy will, denounces the threatening of his wrath

on all those who depart from his commandment, and rebel against him. The threatening and the promise are declared at the same time under the old covenant. "See," saith he, "I have set before thee this day, life and good, and death and evil, in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live; but if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live; that thou mayest obey his voice and cleave unto him. At the very time he declares to Moses, that he will be gracious to whom he will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom he will show mercy, he pronounces his judgment against all those who disobey him. The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, visit-

ing the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon children's children, unto the third and fourth generation." The same divine truths are also fully revealed in the new covenant of grace. We there find that while it is declared that God is good, that God is light, that God is love, it is also asserted that God is just. He is the God of all grace, and while he delighteth in mercy, he is also a consuming fire to the wicked, and declares, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." In the exercise of his mercy and grace, he does not dispossess himself of his other attributes of righteousness and holiness. It is true that he bath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth ; but in dispensing his mercy and justice, his will is ever regulated by infinite wisdom, and goodness, and truth. While he is great in mercy, he is also glorious in holiness. He is a just God, and yet bringeth salvation ; he is a just God, and yet a Saviour. "He is just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." In his love he sent his Son, his only-begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He sent his Son, that we might live through him, that he might be the propitiation for our sins.

“ God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us ; he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.” But if his mercy be despised and rejected, it will be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, for where shall the ungodly and sinner appear, and what will be the end of them that obey not the gospel ? it will be most awful and tremendous, for God is a consuming fire to the wicked.

The Lord Jesus, (he who was called Jesus, because he should save his people from their sins, the same Jesus who was seen to go into heaven,) “ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in them that believe.” It is equally certain that he will be ever mindful of his covenant in regard to his holiness, his righteousness, and his truth, as in respect to his grace, mercy, and love. The works of his hands are verity and judgment, all his commandments are true, they

stand fast for evermore, and are done in truth and equity. He sent redemption to his people. He hath commanded his covenant for ever ; holy and reverend is his name. The God of mercy and truth having proclaimed the blessings which shall await those who keep his covenant, hath denounced a curse on all those who break it ; and making a solemn appeal to the blessing and the curse, to the threatening and the promise which he delivered, he reminds his covenant people of the recompense which shall be made at the resurrection of the just, and from these motives he exhorts and encourages them to walk in dutiful obedience to his holy will and commandments. Under the old covenant, he reminded all those who enter into covenant by circumcision of the promise and engagement made by them and himself. The Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do those statutes and judgments, thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice, and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised

thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments.

Cautions and exhortations of a similar kind, and to the same effect, are continually given in the word of life, to all those who have entered into the new covenant by the seal of baptism. John the Baptist on this ground, exhorted those who were baptised by him, “ to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.” The Apostle Paul, from the same motive, exhorts all those who have been solemnly admitted into the covenant of grace, by the sacrament of baptism, to consider their high calling in Christ, to hold fast their heavenly profession, and to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called. He appeals both to the blessing and the curse, to the recompense of reward which is promised to his good and faithful servants, and to the punishments denounced on sinners by the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds, to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life ; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that

doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the gentile, for there is no respect of persons with God. To prevent all antinomian error, he reminded them that they were buried with him by baptism unto death, and he urged them by this solemn obligation, to walk in newness of life, and no longer to serve sin. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof, neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are, to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." It is to persons admitted into the church of Christ by baptism, that he said, if while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are found sinners: Is Christ therefore the minister of sin? God forbid. And to persons thus received into the Church of Christ, he says, "brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatso-

ever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

To the same purpose St. Peter says, "to those who had obtained like precious faith with himself, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness charity, for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins ; wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Christ himself as a teacher sent from God, as that great prophet which should come into the world, enjoins the same moral obedience to the will and word of

God, as declared in the law of Moses, and in the gospel of grace and salvation. "Think not," said he, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil, for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven, but whosoever shall do and teach them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

We have now considered the sacrament of baptism, as to its more essential point, as a solemn act of incorporation into the Church of Christ, as a sign and seal of the righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ, as a means appointed of God of conveying grace to the souls of his people, and as a sacred pledge, both on the part of God, and of all believers on the part of God, that he will fulfil his promises, and on the part of those who enter into his covenant, that they will do his will, and keep his holy commandments. It has been shown also, that while he is faithful who hath promised, that while all his promises are "yea and Amen in Christ," while

we have the grace and promise of God as our hope, which “hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast;” that the outward solemnities of this sacred ordinance must be ministered, and the conditions of the covenant duly kept, to secure the inward grace and spiritual blessings which are promised by God. All these points, in relation to the holy sacrament of baptism, are in perfect accordance with the sound doctrine of the Church of England, in which it is thus defined in the twenty-seventh article. Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church, the promises of forgiveness of sin, and our adoption to be the sons of God, by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed. Faith is confirmed, and grace is increased by virtue of prayer unto God. And in the canons of our church, it is declared that sacraments ordained of Christ, be not only badges or tokens of Christian men’s profession, but rather, they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace and God’s good will towards

us, by the which it doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but strengthen and confirm our faith in him.

The ministration of baptism which is appointed to be used in the ritual of our church is in exact agreement with the doctrine as stated above. After having declared that all men are conceived and born in sin, and that none can enter into the kingdom of God except he be regenerate and born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, it bids us to call upon God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous goodness he will grant to the infant child, or to the adult believer presented for baptism, that which by nature he cannot have, that he may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy Church, and be made a lively member of the same: that he may enjoy the everlasting benediction of this heavenly washing, and may come to the eternal kingdom which he hath promised by Christ our Lord. Having declared his good-will towards them, it offers up a devout prayer to Almighty God to give his Holy Spirit to him, that he may be born again, and be made an heir of everlasting salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. It then

requires the person to be baptized, (or sponsors as sureties in his name, who thus become godfathers, and godmothers,) to make a solemn vow, promise, and profession, that he will renounce the three great enemies of our souls—the world, the flesh, and the devil ; ‘ and that he will keep God’s holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of his life.’ After a solemn promise of all these things, a devout prayer is presented to our merciful God, that he may grant that the old Adam in the person baptized may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him, that all carnal affections may die in him, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him, and that he may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh.

In the act of consecration, the minister, sponsors, and people, offer up a prayer to the Almighty, everliving God, to sanctify the water to the mystical washing away of sin, and to grant that the person to be baptized may receive the fulness of his grace, and ever remain in the number of his faithful and elect children through Jesus Christ our Lord. He is then baptized by

the minister in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, received into the congregation of Christ's flock, signed with the sign of the cross in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end. The form of sound words now proceeds to declare the person so baptized to be regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church, and the whole congregation yield their hearty thanks to their most merciful Father, that it hath pleased him to regenerate him with his Holy Spirit, to receive him for his own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into his holy church, and earnestly prays that being dead unto sin and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in his death, he may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin, and that as he is made partaker of the death of his Son he may also be partaker of his resurrection, so that finally with the residue of his holy church, he may be an inheritor of his everlasting kingdom through Christ our Lord.

The Church of England when in its form of the baptismal service it speaks of infants being regenerate, and of adult persons as having put on Christ, charitably presumes that all is well done, and in due order,—that the sacrament of baptism is rightly ministered,—and that it is received by a true and living faith, by that faith which purifies the heart, which worketh by love, and which keeps the commandments of God. “For that is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath received him from the dead, thou shalt be saved ; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” It presumes that humble and earnest prayer has been offered up with a pure heart fervently, and in the faith of Jesus Christ by minister and people, by parents and sponsors, by witnesses and sureties, and by the whole congregation then present for the persons baptized, whether they may be infants or adults. The infant child is admitted to baptism on the promise and engagement of others, his godfathers and godmothers, as his sponsors, or sureties to the church of God, which promise,

after he comes to age, he is bound to keep and perform. Infants ought not to be admitted without such pledge.

The adult person is received into the church by baptism on his own solemn and public confession that he renounces the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that he will not follow nor be led by them, that he steadfastly believes in all the articles of the Christian faith in which he desires to be baptized, and that he will obediently keep God's holy will and commandments and walk in the same all the days of his life. It is only on the fulfilment of this solemn vow, promise and profession, both on the part of children, when they come to age to take it upon themselves, and of adults immediately after baptism, that the Father of lights and God of all grace promises to pour out his Holy Spirit upon them to live in them, to dwell with them, and to abide with them for ever, to enlighten their minds, to comfort their hearts, and to sanctify their souls. The blessing which can only be had in Christ are promised to those who love him and keep his commandments. "If,"

said he, “ ye love me, keep my commandments.”

In referring to the rule as to the persons who under the new covenant of grace ought to be received into it, by the sacrament of baptism, we cannot but infer from the command given by Christ, and from the custom which universally prevailed in the primitive church, that baptism is to be ministered to all who are ready to make a solemn profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only to adult believers, but also to infant children, when presented in faith. Blessings both temporal and spiritual, were often bestowed by Christ on the faith of others, and why not to children? Not only the male children of all Jewish parents, but of all those who were in the houses of the people of Israel were all to be circumcised. “ This,” says God, “ is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee : every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in the house or bought with money of any

stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with money must needs be circumcised, and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people. He hath broken my covenant." Gen. xvii. 10—14.

Children of believing parents are entitled to the same privilege from the general commands which our Lord gave in respect to baptism, without any limitation or exception as to age or sex. From the gospel we infer that the God of all grace grants the same privilege of baptism to such children as to their parents; and on this ground the Apostle Paul draws this conclusion in regard to them, "else were your children unholy, but now are they clean." It is certain that young children are capable of being admitted into covenant with their God. They were directly included in the covenants made with Adam, with Noah, and with Abraham, and virtually in the new covenant grace was promised to all from the greatest to the least. As death entered by Adam's offence and reached to those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, so the

benefits of Christ's redemption were designed for all, "for as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." The promise which God gave after the fall, was to the woman and her seed. The covenant made with Noah expressly comprized all children descended from him. God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, "I, behold, I establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you." So God when he entered into covenant with Abraham the father of the faithful, declared that in his "seed should all the families of the earth be made blessed." And God said unto Abraham, "Thou shalt keep my covenant, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations; this is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you." God himself declares that the act of circumcision was to be a token of the covenant between himself and the people of Israel. And

the Apostle says that Abraham received the sign of circumcision, “ a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also, and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised. For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.” The act of circumcision was expressly enjoined by God himself on the children of Israel, and the eighth day after birth, was fixed on for this purpose. We may therefore infer that if children were not to be admitted into the new covenant, by baptism, which is now appointed the sign and seal of the righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ, there would have been a prohibition to that effect from Christ himself. But no such exclusion or exception has been made by him ; so far from it he gave one general command without any limitation or exception as to age, to his Apostles, to “ go and (i. e. to make disciples of all na-

tions,) teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ;” and he shewed the most marked attention and regard to the case of infant babes and young children, saying, “except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” “They brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them ; but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him and said “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, shall not enter therein ;” “and he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”

The tender affection and regard of Christ towards these babes and sucklings is here manifested, and it is evident from this act, that they were the special objects of his grace and blessing, and therefore we infer that the children of believing or Christian parents are not only fit objects of his grace and blessing, but may be admitted to Christian baptism. It has been accordingly the

universal custom of the Catholic church from the primitive times to consecrate them to God. Many of the early fathers refer to it. Clemens Romanus and Justyn Martyr speak of the necessity of it, from the fallen and corrupt state of man, by the first birth. Irenæus, also, refers to infants, little children, and boys, as well as young men and old, as being born again in baptism. Tertullian refers to their baptism as a general custom. For a striking case relating to infant baptism, which was referred to, the council of Carthage in the third century, the question was not, whether young children might be baptized at all, but whether, if need required, as soon as they were born, or not till the eighth day, as in the case of circumcision. By this council, consisting of sixty-six bishops, it was unanimously agreed, that the grace and mercy of God was not to be denied to such infants, who partaking of corruption by the first Adam, need to have it washed away by the second Adam, who died for all.¹ Origen, who lived about the same time, expressly asserts that the church had from the Apostles a tradition to grant baptism to little children. And St. Austin

¹ Quantum vero ad causam infantium pertinet, &c.

CYPRIAN AD FIDEM.

speaks of young children and sucklings hanging at their mother's breast, being brought to baptism ; and he says that the custom ought not to be despised or neglected.

The first point which the church requires in persons to be baptised, is a public profession of repentance from dead works to serve the living God. Thus John the Baptist, when he entered upon his sacred office of preparing the way of the Lord, came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." At the same time he pointed them to Christ as the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and warning them to "flee from the wrath to come," he said, "bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, "we have Abraham to our Father, for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees, therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire." So, too, when Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, he said, "the time is fulfilled, repent ye and believe the gospel."

The Apostles, in preaching the word, proclaimed the same divine truths, saying, “repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out; repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. “God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” These sacred truths are indeed continually declared in proclaiming the message of grace and salvation to sinners, but they were more especially required of all those who were admitted into the church of Christ by baptism. Such was the profession of repentance required of the Jews to be admitted into the new covenant of grace, when on the day of Pentecost, they were pricked in their hearts, and under a deep conviction of sin, said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter said unto them, “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children,” and “to as many as the Lord our God shall call. Then they that gladly received the word were baptised, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” Accordingly Tertullian speaks of such a repentance towards

God and renunciation of sin, at the solemnizing of baptism, when he says, ‘*Aquam adituri, ibidem sed ut aliquanto prius in ecclesiâ sub Antistitis manu, contestamur nos renunciare diabolo, et Pompæ et angelis ejus.*’ ‘We again, as before, in the church, under the hand of the minister, who baptizes, solemnly pledge ourselves to renounce the devil, and his pomp, and his angels.’ The same solemn vow, promise, and profession, is required by the church of England from all those who engage in the holy covenant of grace by the sacrament of baptism, ‘They promise and vow three things, that they will renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.’

Another point required of all persons on being admitted into the covenant of grace, by baptism, is to make a public and solemn confession of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour of the world. “Seeing that we have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, who is passed into the heavens, let us hold fast our profession.” Such a confession is of the gospel, and must be made in the profession of our holy religion. “For that is the word of faith which

we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The apostle John speaks to the same effect when he says, "Hereby know we the spirit of God, every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." Nay, Christ himself, who witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate, said, "Whosoever confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father in heaven." "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." If then it be required of all who profess the high calling of Christ, to make this confession of their faith in the Son of God, how much more ought it to be done at the solemn moment of being admitted into the new covenant of grace by the sacrament of baptism. And thus we find it to have been, in point

of fact, as to the cases of baptism, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. For we find that on the day of Pentecost, after the preaching of Peter, “they that gladly received the word were baptised;” so too the converts of Samaria, when “they *believed* Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God,” “they were baptized. And the Eunuch of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia, was informed, on making this confession of his faith, he might be received into the Church of Christ, and admitted into the covenant of grace by the seal of baptism.—Philip said, “If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest; and he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down into the water, Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him.’” It was on a confession of this faith that Paul, (who had been a persecutor, and blasphemer, and injurious,) was received into the Church of Christ. Ananias said unto him, “Brother Saul, the God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and shouldest see that just one, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth, for thou shalt be a witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard, and now why

tarriest thou? arise, *and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*"

It is evident also, that Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, and that the jailor at Philippi, who asked what he must do to be saved, believed in Christ before they were baptised. So too when it is said of certain persons, that they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, baptized into Jesus, baptized into Christ, we infer not only that they were admitted into the covenant of grace, according to the plan and form prescribed by Christ, not only that the end and design of their baptism, was that they should put on Christ, and be conformed to his image, but that in the very act, they professed a faith in him as the Son of God, and Saviour of the world. Thus we find St. Paul said at Ephesus, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus, when they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

A third point required in all those who are presented for baptism to be admitted into the Church of Christ, is, that they shall engage in a solemn vow, promise, and profession of dutiful

obedience to the will and commandments of God. It is true that a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, has been made by Jesus Christ, who offered himself once for all, “who tasted death for every man,” “who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world.” It is true that man, as a sinner, cannot be “justified by the works of the law, but by faith of Jesus Christ,” “who is of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” It is equally certain, however, that the works of the moral law in obedience to the will of God, are the only evidence of faith in Jesus Christ, the only certain proof of filial duty to God, and of the constraining love of a Saviour. “If ye love me, (says Christ), keep my commandments.” “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” “If a man love me, he will keep my words. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings.” Such dutiful obedience, such filial love, are the only certain marks of true discipleship to Christ, that as King we are willing that he shall reign over us, that as servants, we should obey him as our Lord and master in heaven.

To guard against the Antinomian heresy, of holding the truth in unrighteousness, it must be of the first importance, that when new converts are admitted into the church by the holy sacrament of baptism, they should make a public and solemn vow, that they will ever, by the help and grace of God, walk according to the will of God, and keep his holy commandments as long as they live. This blessed result indeed, is the very end of this holy sacrament, and all the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus, are said to be “buried with him in baptism, wherein also they are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God.” “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death,” “that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” St. Peter represents the spiritual design of this holy ordinance, much in the same way, “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh,

but the answer of a good conscience towards God."

We have now considered the great end and design of baptism, as well as the solemn vow and promise in which we engage, as the disciples of the Lord Jesus, when we thus enter into covenant with God by this holy sacrament. But in considering the sacrament of Christian baptism in the Church of God, it is of very high importance, while we have respect to the more essential parts of it, to pay due regard to the form and manner of its ministration. No truth is more certain, than that those things which are good and excellent in themselves, often fail in producing their intended effect from not being ministered as they ought. For if on the one hand there may be a "form of godliness, while men deny the power thereof," if they may "honour God with their lips while their heart is far from him," and "if they may have a name to live while they are dead;" on the other hand, true religion can never be maintained without the means of grace, unless persons are duly appointed for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. A sacred order of men has been appointed to the work of the ministry, and the holy sacraments

ought to be rightly and duly administered by them. “How shall they preach except they be sent?” and no man taketh this office unto himself, but he that is called of God.” Due forms and order must be observed in the church of Christ. The apostle gives command not only that “all things be done unto edifying,” but “let all things be done decently and in order.” In the ordination of Ministers, the first point which demands our attention is, that they be rightly appointed to the office, and that they are duly authorized by Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. It has been thought by some who entertain very low and unworthy notions of the holy ordinance of baptism, that the sacrament itself may be ministered by any person at their own will, so that they follow the form prescribed by Christ, and the person is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. In some churches, and among some sects and denominations, men have been allowed to baptize who were never called or consecrated to the office; and among others, women; and among others, strange as it may appear, children have baptized each other in play, and it has been considered by some to be Christian baptism,

valid, and legitimate. The rite of *Christian* baptism in all these cases, when not solemnized by ministers of Christ, is not the ordinance of Christ; it is not that holy sacrament of baptism to which he has given sanction and authority in his holy church. We never read of a layman in the gospel as performing the ritual of baptism. Christ gave his command only to his appointed ministers duly ordained. All women are expressly forbidden to minister publicly in the church of Christ. “Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak.” “I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” Not only the public teaching, but the ministry of sacraments was forbidden them. That the Apostle is to be so interpreted we may infer from the words of Clement, who lived in the time of the Apostles, who says, ‘if we have denied them to teach, how should any man dispense with nature, and make them ministers of holy things, seeing this profanation is a part of the Grecian’s impiety, which for the service of women goddesses, have women priests.’ Tertullian speaks to the same point, when he says, ‘it is not permitted to a woman to speak in the church, no not to teach, not to

baptize, not to offer prayer and praise, nor to assume the ministration of any sacerdotal office.' Writing again expressly on the subject of baptism, he says, 'The petulance of a woman which has usurped the right of teaching, will in like manner assume to herself the right of baptizing; but if some defend, what has been falsely ascribed to Paul, to sanction the teaching and baptizing of women, let them know that the Presbyter in Asia, who penned that writing, as though he was to derive authority from the name of Paul, professes that he did it from his regard to him, but he really deviated from truth. For how can it be thought to be like the truth, that he should give the power of teaching and baptizing to a woman, whom he would not even allow to ask questions in the church. Let them be silent, he said, and ask their own husbands at home. But they should know whose office it is, that baptism is not rashly to be trusted to others.' In another passage he remarks, 'How wrong are those women who assume the assurance to teach, to contend, to exorcise, to minister in holy things, and perhaps to baptize.' Epiphanius speaks to the same effect when he brings a charge against the Pepuzians,

a sect of the Montanists, who made women bishops, and women presbyters, perverting a passage of St. Paul, who says, “that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female.” In a dissertation referring especially to this point, he shews at large that no woman was ever ordained to offer sacrifice, or perform any solemn service of the church, which if it had been allowed to any, would certainly have been granted to the Virgin Mary herself, who was so highly favoured of God. But neither she nor any other woman had ever the Priest’s office committed to them. ‘There is indeed,’ says he, ‘an order of deaconesses in the church, but their business is not to minister, or perform any part of the sacerdotal office, or any of the sacred mysteries, but to be decent helpers to the female sex in the time of their baptism, sickness, or the like.’ And therefore he denies that the church ever made them presbyteresses, or priestesses. It is evident from the general history of the church, that those who are mentioned as helpers in the Lord, were intended to assist the appointed ministers of Christ as to baptism and other kind offices which could not be properly done by the other sex; and so like Phebe, Priscilla, like Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa,

and Persis, among the converts of Rome, are spoken of as ‘servants of the church,’ as ‘helpers in Christ Jesus,’ and as ‘labouring much in the Lord.’ As to the ministration of baptism by children, it is enough to say that however it may have been abused at times by certain persons, there is not the slightest sanction for it in the word of life. ‘The nullity,’ says Hooker, ‘which a judge doth by way of authority without authority, is known to all men, and agreed upon with full consent of the whole world, every man receiveth it as a general edict of nature; and we cannot but infer in his own words, that baptism without the power of ordination, is as a judgment without sufficient jurisdiction, void, frustrate, and of no effect. In earthly things we do know that if men act for others without any commission, without any authority, that whatsoever they do is void and of none effect, and some inference will justly follow as to things that are heavenly.’ We infer then in all *ordinary* cases, as “no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God,” that it can only be rightly executed by those who are duly ordained as ambassadors of Christ, who have been appointed as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries

of God. We cannot therefore but come to this conclusion, that such baptism ministered by mere laymen, by women, or by children, is void and of no effect. If one sacrament of Christ may be ministered by those who are not duly appointed, so may the other ; yet there are some while they entertain so very low and unworthy sentiments as to this sacred ordinance, who consider baptism ministered by those that have not been ordained to this sacred office as valid, but who would think it a gross profanation of the Lord's supper to be thus ministered. But the same objections which apply to the ministration of the Lord's supper, must apply also to the sacrament of baptism. None have authority to execute the sacred office in either, but those who have been duly appointed to it, by Christ the author and finisher of our faith, and the great Head of the Church. "As my Father hath sent me," said he, "so send I you," and "I have appointed unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." The commission which was given by the Son of God our Lord Jesus Christ, to his ministers, was a public and solemn ordination to invest them in their holy office. "He *ordained* twelve, that they might be with him, and sent them forth to preach."

“He gave them power and authority,” as his own ministers to preach the gospel of the “kingdom.” “He set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers.” “He gave some Apostles, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” He gave them the power of the keys of his kingdom, to bind and to loose, to remit and to retain sin, by the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper. We are not to suppose the great head of the church, the Son of God, gave the command to all his disciples, but only to the twelve specially, and so virtually to all his ministers in every age and place when duly appointed and rightly ordained. “Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” “Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained.” The special means of grace appointed by the gospel for binding and loosing, for remitting and retaining sin, are through the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s supper, ordained by Christ. There is but one

baptism for the remission of sins, and in appointing the holy communion, Christ said, “this is my blood of the new testament which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins.’” It was to the twelve Apostles, and in them to all his ordained ministers that he gave this sacred commission. They only were present when he instituted the Lord’s supper, and commissioned to continue it in remembrance of himself to the end of the world. It was to his Apostles alone, after his resurrection from the dead, that he gave a commission to baptize. He did not say to all his disciples, but only to the eleven (for Judas the traitor was gone to his own place) “Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.” I would not be understood to say that the sacraments of Christ should never be ministered in case of absolute necessity by laymen, as when mariners are cast away on a desert island, or when any other disciples of Christ might be in a place or country, where there were no appointed ministers; but this I would say, on the authority of the word of life, that wherever such ministers are to be had, this work and

labour of love ought not to be undertaken by unhallowed hands, by men not appointed—not ordained. “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron ;” “Let a man so account of us as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.” “We are ambassadors for Christ.” The sacraments of Christ, as seals of the new covenant of grace, are sacred and solemn institutions; and ought to be ministered by those who are appointed. They would lose all their virtue and power when ministered by profane and unhallowed hands, and their whole design be lost; and on these grounds the Article of our church declares ‘that it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work, by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord’s vineyard.’

There are some, who in considering what constitutes rightful baptism, as an ordinance of Christ, have been led to infer, that if the more

essential parts of it are duly observed, that other circumstances are of little or no importance, and this has been applied to the mode of ministering the sacrament of baptism. It has been very generally considered within the last three hundred years, that it makes no difference whether it be done by sprinkling, or effusion, or washing the body in pure water. Now in adverting to this point, there can be no doubt but that the mode of baptizing by John the Baptist, and by Christ and his apostles, is the rightful mode, and that mode was by washing or bathing the body with pure water. Nor is the washing the body in pure water, a point of mere indifference. The form and mode of initiation into the church of Christ, are in their consequences of high and solemn importance; and though the form of godliness may exist without the power, yet we are to “hold fast the form of sound words in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” Now in regard to baptism, the outward and visible sign becomes an integral part of the ordinance itself. To justify the sprinkling or aspersion in respect to baptism, appeals have often been made to the words of Scripture, as it is said in the book of Numbers, “Thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them,

sprinkle water of purifying upon them.” And again the prophet Isaiah says, speaking of Christ, “ He shall sprinkle many nations,” and “ I will pour water upon him that is thirsty ;” and also Ezekiel, declares, “ I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.” These passages have a reference to the spiritual cleansing, and purifying of the soul, but there is no ground at all to infer from them, that the effusion or sprinkling of water is a rightful and proper mode of Christian baptism. In cases of absolute necessity in imminent peril or danger of life, it was indeed at times practised in the primitive church, but we may safely affirm, that for the four first centuries it was never resorted to, but in cases of extreme peril, when a person lay in great danger of death on a sick bed, and from this circumstance it was distinguished as clinical baptism, from the Greek word *κλινια*, signifying a bed. This mode of admission into the Church of Christ, was an exception from the general rule, and common practice of baptism in the early church, as we may learn from the following passage of an Epistle of Cyprian:—You inquire also dear son, what I think of such as obtain the grace, (that is of baptism,) in time of their sick-

ness or infirmity, whether they are to be accounted lawful Christians, because they are not washed all over with the water of salvation, but have only some water poured upon them ;' and after reasoning at a considerable length, he concludes, that such baptism is valid, and that if persons recover, it is not necessary that they should be baptized by immersion. They did not however allow those who had received this clinic baptism, (as it was called,) to be admitted to the holy order of Ministers, and this was among the objections against the election of Novatian to the bishopric of Rome, that he had been baptized when sick in bed. The custom of the primitive church gives no sanction to baptism by effusion or sprinkling, except in case of necessity. Is it then asked why such sprinkling is now become in practice so common ? To such a question it may be replied, that the first author who speaks of such baptism in the church, is Gennadius of Marseilles in the fifth century, who says that ' baptism was ministered in his time in the Gallic church indifferently either by immersion, or by sprinkling.' It is certain however, that baptism by sprinkling had not yet become general in that church. Even in the thirteenth century, Thomas

Aquinas says, that baptism may be given not only by immersion, but also by effusion of water, or sprinkling with it, but it is the safer way to baptize by immersion, because that is the more ancient custom. Erasmus tells us that in his time, that is, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, it was the custom to sprinkle infants in Holland, and to dip them in England. When effusion was first substituted in the room of immersion, they poured the water three times upon the face, as appears from the council of Angier, in the thirteenth century, and the same practice continued in Germany as late as the middle of the fifteenth century. In the form of common prayer printed in King Edward the sixth's reign, the minister is directed to dip the child. In a sermon published by Watson, Bishop of Lincoln, in the year 1558, the last year of Queen Mary's reign, he says that though the ancient tradition of the church has been from the beginning to dip the child three times, yet that it is not of such necessity, but that if it be but once dipped in the water it is sufficient, yea and in time of great peril and necessity, if the water be but poured upon the head it will suffice. In the reign of Elizabeth, immersion came by degrees into disuse, and this

alteration was in a great measure owing to the principles which some of our divines had imbibed at Geneva, where they had taken refuge during the reign of Queen Mary ; and Calvin directs that the minister should pour water upon the infant, and this was the first public form of baptism which prescribed effusion. Our present rubric directs that the minister, ‘ if they shall certify him that the child may well endure it, shall dip him in the water ; but if they shall certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon him ; ’ yet for these last two hundred years, it has been the general practice in this country, perhaps with some exceptions at the beginning of that period to baptize children by sprinkling them with water. Mr. Wheatly’s account is much to the same effect. After having stated that by dipping, the ends and effects of baptism are more significantly expressed, and that baptism, except on extraordinary occurrences, was seldom or never administered for the four first centuries, except by immersion, he adds, ‘ nor is effusion or sprinkling ordinarily used ‘ to this day in any country that was never subject ‘ to the Pope. And it has never yet obtained ‘ so far as to be enjoined, dipping having been

‘ always prescribed by the rubrick. The Salisbury
‘ Missal, printed in 1530 (the last that was in
‘ force before the reformation) expressly requires
‘ and orders dipping. And in the first common
‘ prayer book of king Edward VI. the general
‘ order is to dip the child in the water, so it be
‘ discreetly and warily done ; the rubric only allow-
‘ ing, if the child be weak, that then it shall
‘ suffice to pour water upon it. Nor was there
‘ any alteration made in the following book,
‘ except the leaving out the order to dip him
‘ thrice, which was prescribed by the first book.
‘ However it being allowed to weak children
‘ (though strong enough to be brought to church) to
‘ to be baptized by effusion ; many fond ladies at
‘ first, and then by degrees the common people,
‘ would persuade the minister that their children
‘ were too tender for dipping. But what prin-
‘ cipally tended to confirm this practice was, that
‘ several of our English divines flying into Ger-
‘ many and Switzerland, during the bloody reign
‘ of Queen Mary, and returning home when
‘ Elizabeth came to the throne, brought back with
‘ them a great love and zeal to the customs of
‘ those Protestant churches beyond sea, where
‘ they had been sheltered and received ; and con-

‘sequently, from the custom in Geneva and some
‘other places, baptism now began to be per-
‘formed by effusion, Cal. Ins. lib. iv. c. 15. They
‘thought they could not do the church of England
‘a greater piece of service, than to introduce a
‘practice sanctioned by so great an oracle as Cal-
‘vin. So that in the latter times of Queen Eliza-
‘beth, and during the reigns of King James, and
‘King Charles I. there were but very few children
‘dipped in the font. And afterwards, when the
‘directory was put out by the Parliament, ef-
‘fusion (to those who could submit to their ordi-
‘nance) began to have a shew of establishment, it
‘being declared not only lawful, but sufficient and
‘most expedient, that children should be baptized
‘by pouring or sprinkling of water on their face ;
‘and as it were for the further prevention of im-
‘mersion or dipping, it was particularly provided,
‘that baptism should not be administered in places
‘where fonts in the time of popery were unfitly and
‘superstitiously placed; and accordingly (which
‘was in keeping with the rest of their reformation)
‘they changed the font into a bason, which being
‘brought to the minister in his reading desk, and
‘the child being held below him, he dipped in his
‘fingers, and so took up water enough just to

‘ let a drop or two fall on the child’s face. Our
‘ divines at the restoration understanding a little
‘ better the sense of scripture and antiquity, again
‘ restored the order for immersion. However, for
‘ prevention of any danger to the child, the minis-
‘ ter is advised to be first certified that he will
‘ endure it. So that the difference between the
‘ old rubric and what is now in use, is only this. As
‘ it stood before, the minister was to dip, unless
‘ there was an averment or allegation of weakness ;
‘ as it stands now, he is not to dip, if there be
‘ an averment or certifying of strength not
‘ sufficient to endure it.’—*Wheatly on Baptism.*

Baptism by immersion was left off in most of the western churches much earlier than in England, but it still continues to be the universal custom among the Christians of the east, and there is no doubt but that it was uniformly so performed in the early church of Christ, in the west as well as in the east. The very word baptize, properly means, to wash a person in water, by dipping or immersion. It is evident that it was by this mode that John the Baptist baptized all who came to him, and that their bodies were washed with water. There can be no question but that John himself, and those who were baptized

of him, went into the water, “and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.” And it is said of Jesus when he was baptized, “that he went up straightway out of the water.” We read that “John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there, and they came, and were baptized” of him. We cannot but infer that in these cases their bodies were actually washed with pure water, and we find that the same mode of admitting new converts into the covenant of grace was continued. The word baptism has, no doubt, sometimes figuratively another meaning; but as to the admission into the church, it implies that the body was washed with water. It was in this manner that the Eunuch was baptized, “And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him.” It has been contended in opposition to all authority in the early church on this point, that no particular direction being given in Scripture concerning the manner in which water is to be applied in baptism, we may allow immersion, effusion, or aspersion to be equally valid. Such observations have been made more to confirm a

custom that has unwarily crept into the church, than to maintain the truth itself. But this is not the way to preserve the church in its primitive and pure state. To *keep* it pure, we must appeal to “the law and the testimony,” “Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths,” “and walk therein.” There can be no doubt but the word baptize implies more than effusion or sprinkling, and that it means to wash or to bathe, and we have seen that Christian baptism in the first ages of the church was uniformly ministered by washing the body with pure water. Nor is such baptism to be considered as a mere point of indifference. There is great reason to infer that the ordinance of baptism in latter times has been greatly degraded as a sacrament in many churches, especially in the church of England (in opposition to the rubric of that church) from the very circumstance of sprinkling being so commonly received, and from this circumstance also it has lost much of its solemnity as a sacrament of Christ. It must be obvious to all those who seriously consider the subject, that the washing of the body with water is in itself a more solemn act than that of mere sprinkling, and therefore more calculated to im-

press the mind as an ordinance of sacred dedication to God, and entering into covenant with him, as it must be obvious to all that it more aptly represents the cleansing of the soul by “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” It is but too evident, that the mode of baptism by sprinkling has in fact degenerated to a “mere form of godliness without the power thereof.” The church of England, as we have seen, whilst in a case of pressing necessity and imminent danger of death it admits of sprinkling or effusion, in all ordinary cases when the person to be baptized is in a state of health and strength, requires immersion, or the washing of the body in pure water. The rubric declares in respect to infant baptism, that the minister naming the child after his godfathers and godmothers (if they shall certify that the child may well endure it,) shall dip it in water wisely and discreetly, but if they shall certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it, saying, ‘I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ In all ordinary cases, therefore, although in point of fact we know the practice is widely different, it presumes that the child is baptized by im-

mersion, and in the office of private baptism, if there be any doubt whether the child has been before baptized, it speaks only of dipping the child in the font, and in the form of baptism for adults the rubric enjoins that the minister shall dip the person in water, or pour water upon him. In point of fact, it is generally allowed by all who have attended to the question, that immersion, or the washing of the body in pure water, was in all ordinary cases the received mode of Christian baptism in the primitive church. Those who differed in some other points as to this sacrament agreed in this, and the holy sacrament was in the Church of Christ so administered to persons of every age, and of each sex, in the primitive church. There were more instances, as one of the fathers says, of persons who did not baptize at all, than of those who baptized without immersion. The custom which commonly prevailed in the early church, was first to wash them with water to incorporate them into the Church of Christ; and then they were instantly covered with white garments, as an emblem of purity, being clothed with the robe of righteousness, and the garment of salvation; and from these white garments which were put

on, the day of Pentecost, (or which baptism was generally ministered) is called Whitsunday; and it was intended to denote that they had put off “the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man” “after the image of him that created him.” The fathers of the church often speak of new converts when baptized, as “buried with Christ by baptism into death,” that ‘when they dipped their bodies into the water, the old man was buried, and when they arose again, the new man arose with them.’ ‘That he who descends into the water and is baptized and outwardly washed as a nesphyte, being received by faith into the church, he is baptized inwardly by the Spirit of God;’—that water applies to the body externally, but the Spirit of grace applies to the soul. They speak of ‘the immersion in water as a descent into the grave, and the rising again out of the water as a resurrection from the dead.’ They refer to the words of the Apostle, who says, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness

of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection : knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin," " being buried with him in baptism, wherein ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." The sacrament of baptism was not only ministered by immersion in the early church, but that immersion was commonly repeated three times, and therefore it was called trine immersion. Tertullian often refers to baptism as so solemnized in his day. ' We dip the person,' says he, ' not once, but three times in naming each person in the trinity.' Declarations are made to the same effect by St. Basil and Jerome. But no one is more particular on this point than St. Ambrose, who says, ' Thou wast asked, Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty? and thou saidst, I believe, and wast dipped; that is, wast buried. Again thou wast asked, Dost thou believe in our Lord Jesus Christ? and thou saidst, I believe, and wast dipped; and therefore wast buried again with Christ, for he that is buried with Christ rises again with Christ.

Thirdly, thou wast asked, dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost? thou saidst, I believe, and wast dipped a third time.' Dipping, or immersion, was thus repeated three times, and there was what he calls, a triple confession made in the name of each person of the Holy Trinity. St. Basil and St. Jerome speak of this practice of trine immersion, as derived from the apostles, and others ascribe it to the institution of Christ himself. Thus St. Chrysostom says, 'he delivered to his disciples one baptism in three immersions of the body, when he said to them, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

There is no time, or place, or age, specially fixed by Christ and his apostles, or that has been required by the church for the solemnization of baptism. It is true that some churches in the early times fixed on the festivals of the Epiphany, or Easter, or Pentecost, to administer this sacred ordinance as having a peculiar reference to Christ's manifestation, to his rising from the dead, and to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost; and there cannot be a doubt that baptism so administered, would have an impressive effect, as referring to the solemn events commemorated at

such times. But as the command of Christ is general, there is no reason to confine its ministration to any particular time;—it is left to the option and convenience of the disciples of Christ, as their own judgment and discretion may advise, and we may say with the apostle on another occasion, “he that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord, he doth not regard it.” Tertullian, writing on the very subject of baptism, says, that every day was the Lord’s day, that every hour and every time was fit for baptism; if there be a difference as to the solemnity, there is no difference as to the grace itself. It is precisely the same as to the place. There are some in different ages of the church, who preferred the waters of Jordan because Christ was baptized there, and have come from far distant places to celebrate it in that river. But the place was not confined by Christ, when he said, “Go into all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” When sanctified by the word of God and prayer, the water of one river or spring, of one country or place, is as sacred as another for this purpose. It is only required that the water consecrated to

this use should be pure water. All other circumstances in relation to the water are of no importance. ‘There is no difference,’ says Tertullian, ‘whether a person be baptized in a sea or a pond, a river or a fountain, a lake or a pool, there is no difference, between those whom John baptized in Jordan, and whom Peter baptized in the Tiber.’ This is the rule of the apostle ; “as every one has received the gift, minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God !” As there is no difference as to the water, so there is no difference as to the minister in respect to the grace of God, if he be duly appointed. The weakness or unworthiness of the minister, will not invalidate the sacrament of baptism. ‘The truth of Christianity,’ says Hooker, ‘with constancy, teaches that evil ministers of good things are as torches, a light to others, a waste to none but themselves only, and that the foulness of their hands, can neither any whit impair the virtue, nor stain the glory of the mysteries of Christ.’ On the other hand, neither the talents nor the piety of the minister can ensure, of himself, the spiritual gifts of God. The Father of lights bestows them as seemeth best

to his godly wisdom : “ Paul may plant and Apollos water,” but it is “ God only who giveth the increase.” The same Spirit sanctifies the waters of every place, and when consecrated to baptism by fervent and earnest prayer, in true faith, will equally avail as the means of conveying grace to the soul. “ Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord, and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.”

The gifts of grace are manifold, they vary more or less in all the children of God. Some are more distinguished by one gift, and some by another, but whatever may be the spiritual gift, they all proceed from the same fountain of life. “ All these worketh that one and the self-same spirit dividing severally as he will. For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body—so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

There is another point in respect to baptism

which, though not essential to it as a Christian sacrament, yet is of very high moment as to its solemnity,—that it be ministered in public. The church of Christ has observed it from the beginning as a public act. The baptism of John, although it was solemnized in the wilderness, yet it was always observed as a public act. “There went out unto him all the land of Judea and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the River Jordan.” It is evident that it was a public ministry performed in the desert, and he at once addressed all the multitude that came forth to be baptized. He spoke to the people at large as well as to the publicans and soldiers, and all the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John whether he were the Christ or not. It is evident that the baptism of Christ was solemnized in public. It was when the multitude was present, and many of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to John’s baptism, that Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him ; and it was to the Priests and Levites, and to others who were present, that John publicly pointed him out as the “Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” As John’s baptism was ministered in public, so

too was that of Christ and his Apostles. There are several passages of Scripture in which it is said that Christ and his disciples admitted converts into his church by baptism. It was some time after his own baptism in the river Jordan and after he had declared to Nicodemus, "that except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," that he was so engaged. "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and baptized." "Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto him, and said, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." It evidently shews it to have been a public act, and it was to avoid the publicity which his baptism had made, that he thought it needful at the time to retire from the scene—"When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples, he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee."

It seems evident from the baptism of John,

and that of Christ, that this holy ordinance of consecration, a solemn admission into the church was intended to be public. And so as far as circumstances would allow, it seems to have been publicly solemnized in the primitive church, as on the day of Pentecost, when they that gladly received the word of Peter were baptized, “and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” And again “when the people of Samaria believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” It was a public act also when Cornelius with “his kinsmen and near friends,” and “all who heard the word,” were “baptized in the name of the Lord,” when Lydia and “her household was baptized,” and when the jailor was “baptized he and all his,” when many of the Corinthians “believed and were baptized,” and when “certain disciples” at Ephesus “were baptized, in the name of the Lord Jesus;” “and all the men were about twelve.” Baptism continued to be observed as a public act in the early church. Justyn Martyr in his apology for the Christians thus declares, that ‘after prayer and fasting, the persons who are to be baptized are

brought to a place where there is water, and are there regenerated in the same manner as other Christians have been regenerated ; for they make a lavation (i. e. a washing) in the water, in the name of the Father of all and Lord God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. For Christ himself said, Except ye be born again, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of of heaven.” Tertullian speaks of it also as a public solemn act—‘ when about to enter into the water, we again as before in the church under the hand of the priest, make a joint attestation to renounce the devil and all his works.’ The novels of Justitian and the ancient councils speak of baptism as a public act, and we know that in early churches it was the custom to solemnize it at the greater festivals, especially Easter and Whitsunday. The rubric of the Church of England accordingly requires that it should be public, declaring that ‘ it is most convenient that baptism should not be administered but upon Sundays and other holy days, when the most number of people come together, as well for the congregation there present may testify the receiving of them that be newly baptized, into the number of Christ’s Church ; as also because in the baptism of infants,

every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his baptism,' 'and the curates of every parish shall often admonish the people, that they defer not the baptism of their children longer than the first or second Sunday next after their birth, or other holy-day falling between.' 'And also they shall warn them, that without like great cause and necessity they procure not their children to be baptized at home in their houses.'

I have thus considered the doctrine of baptism as a Christian sacrament, especially in regard to the Church of England, and I think it must appear to every unprejudiced mind, that the present received forms of the church, both in respect to infant and adult baptism, are instituted after the model of the primitive church, as appointed by Christ and his apostles. My object has been to restore this act of consecration to its original design, to render it a solemn and sacred dedication to God, by which alone we can expect the blessing which is promised to it, and it is my fervent prayer to the throne of grace, that not only all the ministers and members of the Church of England, but of the Church Universal may so regard it. "For as the

body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body ; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.”

THE END.

